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news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEDERAL JOBLESS BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO RESIDENTS IN 19 MICHIGAN COUNTIES AFFECTED BY MAY STORMS

JULY 12, 2004 – Michigan residents in 19 counties, who were left temporarily or permanently unemployed because of damage from the storms, tornados and flooding that swept through the counties in late May, may be eligible for special federal unemployment aid.

Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) will be available to workers who worked in or were scheduled to begin work in any of the affected counties but were unable to work because of the disaster.

Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) will be taking applications for the federal DUA benefits.

"Workers, including the self-employed, in any of the 19 counties who either lost their jobs or had their employment interrupted due to the severe storms, tornados and flooding that struck from May 20 through May 24 will have 30 days, until **Wednesday, August 11, 2004**, to file DUA claims," Sharon Bommarito, UIA director, announced.

The federal government declared the following Michigan counties as disaster areas:

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|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| o Barry | o Jackson | o Ottawa |
| o Berrien | o Kent | o Sanilac |
| o Cass | o Livingston | o Shiawassee |
| o Genesee | o Macomb | o St. Clair |
| o Gladwin | o Mecosta | o St. Joseph |
| o Ingham | o Oakland | o Wayne |
| o Ionia | | |

UIA estimates that as many as 500 workers may be potentially eligible for the federal unemployment aid. To be eligible for the benefits, a worker cannot be entitled to state unemployment benefits and must meet one of the



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following criteria. As a direct result of the disaster, the worker:

- Is unemployed;
- Is unable to reach the place of work;
- Was to have started work, which is no longer available, or is unable to reach the new job;
- Has become the breadwinner or major support for the household, because the head of the household died as a result of the disaster; or
- Cannot work because of a disaster-incurred injury.

Those left unemployed by the disaster can obtain the necessary applications and instructions by either visiting the Unemployment Insurance Agency's website at www.michigan.gov/uia or by calling the agency's TRA/Special Programs Unit at its toll-free phone number – **1-866-241-0152** – between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays.

Bommarito said, the minimum weekly DUA benefit for full-time workers is \$146 and the maximum is \$362. Part-time workers will be entitled to a reduced amount based on earnings. Eligible DUA claims resulting from the disaster will be retroactively payable from the week ending May 29, 2004, the first full week of potential unemployment following the disaster.

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*Unemployment Insurance Agency news releases are available at the agency's website
(www.michigan.gov/uia).*